

Maryland State Fire Marshal

News Release

Larry Hogan
Governor

Brian S. Geraci
State Fire Marshal



STATE FIRE MARSHAL PROVIDES FACTS ABOUT HOME FIRE SPRINKLERS

STATEWIDE (January 12, 2016) – More than 2,500 fire deaths occur throughout the U.S. each year. Eight out of ten of those fire deaths resulted from home fires. In Maryland, during 2015, 45 fire deaths occurred in one and two family dwellings out of the reported 61 total fire deaths recorded in the state. In direct contrast, Montgomery County experienced 26 fire sprinkler saves in 2015 where certain serious injury or death was avoided as result of the quick actions of residential fire sprinklers. ***“Most home fire deaths can be eliminated with the installation of residential fire sprinklers,”*** stated State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci. ***“The advantage of having fire sprinklers in your home far surpasses the ability of a working smoke alarm alone. A smoke alarm will notify you of a fire; however a fire sprinkler can react and in most cases extinguish a fire before it reaches excessive heat and lethal doses of carbon monoxide, as well as other dangerous toxins released during an uncontrolled fire”.***

Residential fire sprinklers are designed to allow more time to escape the effects of fire. The added benefit, in most cases, is a single fire sprinkler operates and either controls the fire or extinguishes it entirely before excessive irreparable fire damage occurs. Additionally, the quick action of a fire sprinkler helps to protect first responders by containing the fire to the fire origin, thereby reducing the chance for injuries and/or death. It should also be noted that residential fire sprinklers promote the longevity of the volunteer fire service.

Many myths and falsehoods about fire sprinklers exist in the minds of Marylanders. The following facts and safety tips are provided to educate the public with factual information about the life saving benefits of residential fire sprinklers.

- Home fire sprinklers save lives and property by reacting during the early stages of the fires occurrence.
- Smoke does not affect fire sprinklers. Home fire sprinklers react individually to high heat temperatures of 155° - 165°.
- The risk of dying in a home fire decreases significantly when the home is equipped with a fire sprinkler system.
- Home fire sprinklers are easy to maintain by ensuring nothing is hanging from or blocking individual sprinkler heads and a simple test by the homeowner or a contractor can be performed annually to ensure proper water flow.

- Only the sprinkler closest to the fire operates and sprays water directly on the fire. Due to the quick response of the fire sprinkler head, the fire is almost always controlled and/or extinguished prior to the fire departments arrival.
- Homeowners experience lower insurance premiums with installed fire sprinkler systems. Insurance companies offer discounts from 5% to 30% off the fire portion coverage of the home.
- Fire sprinklers are environmentally friendly. The amount of water run-off, pollution and fire damage is reduced by as much as 71%. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), water usage to fight a home fire can be reduced by as much as 91%.
- Materials found in homes today burn faster and at a higher heat release rate as compared to furnishings and small appliances made twenty or more years ago. Fires tend to grow much faster, which allows even less time to escape the deadly heat and toxins produced during a fire.
- In 2015, 50% of the fatal home fires in Maryland occurred between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. when Marylanders are most vulnerable – while sleeping.

Additional information about residential fire sprinklers may be found at these listed websites:

www.nfpa.org
www.homefiresprinkler.org
www.firesafehome.org
www.firemarshal.mdsp.gov
www.mdlifesafety.org



The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at:

www.firemarshal.mdsp.gov and/or <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

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